

[W. L. Newman]

1

[Folkstuff?]

Range-lore

Ruby Mosley

San Angelo, Texas.

Page one [?]

RANGE-LORE

"I have always called Fort Worth my home, as it's my birth-place and was my business center for many years," says W. L. Newman of San Angelo, Texas.

"We moved to Jack County when I was four years of age, however, this does not keep me from remembering how we dreaded those redskins. My mother would hang quilts and blankets over the windows of our little one room log cabin to hide our light so that the Indians might not locate our destination when they were out depredating.

"Out nearest and dearest neighbors were old Mary and Britt Johnson (negroes). I have visited and eaten many times with this old couple. Mary was a good cook and Britt a good provider so we got along just fine. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas

"One day the Indians came and captured old Mary and kept her several mouths before she was returned. 2 Page two

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Old Britt made some kind of trade with the Indians and got her back but no one ever knew what this trade was.

"Britt had a very pretty white horse that he kept tied to the corner of his house when he was not riding or driving him. He often remarked that no Indian should ever ride his horse.

"Old negro Britt was a freighter, carried supplies from Fort Worth to Fort Griffin where the ranchers could get their supplies. One time he and six more negroes were coming from Fort Worth with a four-wagon train and pulled down on Salt Creek in Young County to spend the night. The next morning they got up early, pulled out about sunrise, and they heard the Indians coming. They pulled their train in a circle and were completely surrounded by about 200 wild redskins, shouting, shooting and giving their war cry. The fight began- five negroes were killed in the wagons, one negro boy escaped and old Britt was on the back axle under his wagon, pouring lead. One hundred and forty-four empty shot gun shells were found under Britt's wagon and his gun barrel was bent. All evidence showed that his shells ran out and a hand-to-hand battle was staged. The escaped negro boy ran and walked into Jacksonboro barefooted to get help. My father and a brother of Hez Lowe, the present County Sheriff of Tom Green County, were in the bunch that went out. They found old Britt's body mutilated, his eyes were punched 3 Page three

out, body split open and the internal organs had been removed and replaced by meal; his ears were cut off and his scalp taken.

"The white horse that Britt was so crazy about was killed with shots from his gun. It was believed that Britt would not take chances on escaping and he killed his horse to make his statement hold true, that no Indian should ever ride his white horse.

"I have gone to Britt's grave with old Mary many times to share her sorrow. Just after his death, the Indians came in again and massacred the Cameron family that lived on a little

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creek. They were all seven buried in the same grave near the creek and this has been known as Cameron Creek, since that time.

“Massacreing the seven members of the Cameron family was not enough; that very day they went on down the creek about one mile where they killed Mr. and Mrs. Pete Lynn and took their scalps. Mr. and Mrs. Lynn had two children, a boy 4, and a girl 2, that escaped death as they happened to be playing away from the house in same tall grass. My father and other rangers found this tragedy about two days afterward and the baby girl was nursing the dead mother's breast. The little boy was looking his parents over, wondering what it was all about.

“The rangers carried the two children to their grandfather Lynn's home where they lived afterward. 4 Page four

When the boy was about 17 years of age I carried him to his parents' grave, and related the story of their death as best I could. My father had told me so much about the pitiful sight I would never forget the details. Old Uncle Billie Kutch and Mr. Manning organized a memorial association and erected tombstones for the unfortunate citizens' graves. I have visited them many times and right to-day could go point them out, then tell how each met his doom.

“I worked for the Loving Cattle Company about sixteen years. Oliver Loving was the first and only secretary, until death, for the Cattle Raisers' Association. This organization was formed under a big oak tree at Graham, Texas. Colonel C. C. Slaughter, Burk Burnett, and Oliver Loving were among the charter members. The famous old oak tree has always been cherished by the older cattle men, because of what the organization has meant to the cowman.

“I'm a cowman that has never suffered the hardships of going up the trail; I could have gone many times but stayed on the range, by choice.

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"We always carried our cattle to Henrietta up in Clay County. It was the largest cattle shipping point in the United States at that time; we were only 90 miles from there and it was to our advantage to ship by rail. Sometimes we would carry a thousand or more cattle to 5 Page five

Henrietta, then have to wait a week or more for our turn to load on the train.

"Stampedes were numerous as the ground was strange. Any little unusual commotion, as a polecat, rabbit, thunder, or such like, would give them a start. Our boys always expected us to stay with our cattle regardless of the number in charge.

"This rodeo business they have now- I never go to such tommy-rot. I used to see better ones every morning than these boys stage here, annually. We would have fourteen or fifteen horses a-rearing, pitching, and snorting, all at once when we got ready to go out on the range. Believe me we sure would have to pull leather to stay on. We never had to make our horses pitch.

"When I worked for the Loving Cattle Company I rode a little horse by the name of "Mack". I had trained that little horse from a colt to be a fine cutter. I rode him about four years, when a darned old cattle buyer came in and bought a bunch of settle and had me a-cuttin' 'em out. I thought to myself I was a-doin' a pretty job of it; I always did when I was on Mack. The old cattle buyer rode over to me and asked about the horse. I said, 'He ain't for sale.' Well that guy went on to Mr. Loving about it and bought him. Was I mad? I had a notion of quitin', but had another that beat that one, so I stayed. The fellow paid three times as much for him as 6 Page six

he would an ordinary horse, but I hated to let him go. That taught me a lesson, I never took much interest in the other fellow's horse.

"I began to ride old Long and that devil pitched every time I got on him for four years. He threw me and I never rode him again. We decided to make a work horse out of him but

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he got to pitchin' one day and fell dead. I guess he must have broke a blood vessel, but I never let that worry me.

"We were not rough on the new cowboys, but I really caught every thing when I went in. I was just a kid and those other fellows were much older. They kind of slowed down when they put me on a bad horse and I rode him. If they see there's any stuff in you, they like you and all that hazing stops.

"We always had our fun when an Englishman or some guy from the East that knew nothing, came in for that wild stuff." Range-lore

Ruby Mosley

San Angelo, Texas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mr. W. L. Newman, San Angelo, Texas, interviewed, February 15, 1938.